

Serial Number 09/852,931

Filed: May 10, 2001

Group Art Unit: 2839

b.) Remarks

Claims 1-19 are pending in this application. Claims 1, 14, and 15 have been amended in various particulars. Claim 20 has been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer.

The only outstanding issue concerns a series of rejections. Specifically, claims 1-5, 7-17, 19 and 20 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e), as being anticipated by U.S. Pat. No. 6,097,860, to Laor. In a related rejection, claims 6 and 18 were rejected as being unpatentable, or obvious, over the Laor Patent.

Claims 1, 14, and 15 describe a combination of a monitoring signal generator and a monitoring signal detector. Beam switching system is further provided that connects the user fibers to either a first device or a second device. The monitoring signal generator and the monitoring signal detector are then connected to the other device. In this way, one of the devices can be used to switch the signals from the user fibers, whereas the operation of the other system is monitored by the combination of the monitoring signal detector and generator, through the operation of the beam switching system.

The Laor Patent does not describe similar functionality. For example, the system on the cover page of the patent is directed to a conventional optical matrix switch. It uses mirrors 132 on the array 98 to guide beams between fibers. The claimed switching functionality or combination of signal generator and detector are not shown by the applied reference.

Turning to Claim 16, it is asserted that Figs. 20 and 22 of the Laor Patent anticipate the tap system of Claim 16. Those Figs. 20 and 22 fail to show or suggest a beam splitting substrate that is angled with respect to optical beams for reflecting a portion of each of those optical beams to an array of detectors, each one of the detectors detecting a reflected portion of one of the optical beams. The system of Fig. 22 seems to handle a single fiber.

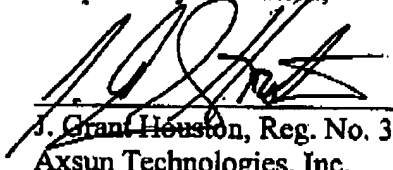
For the foregoing reasons, Applicant believe that the present rejections should be withdrawn.

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Applicant believes that the present application is in condition for allowance. A Notice of Allowance is respectfully solicited. Should any questions arise, the Examiner is encouraged to contact the undersigned.

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Respectfully submitted,



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